

# **MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD**

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## **Iraqi army engineers upgrade to fiber optics**

Sgt. Ann Drier,  
363rd MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The classroom is not sterile or high-tech, but what is taught there will help enable Iraqi engineers to bring their army's communication systems into the 21st Century.

Capt. Ziyad Tariq Obeed, 1st Lt. Hadar Mohammed Sadam, and Sgt. Maj. Zaid Ali Obeed, engineers with Communications Company, 6th Iraqi Army Division, quickly picked up the “lingo” and techniques of fiber optics from the Soldiers of the cable platoon, Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, during a week-long class here Sep. 18 - 24.

The classes were designed by Sgt. Scott Ortiz, Spc. Jose Guerrero and Spc. Brandon Lacombe, Co. A cable support installers, to assist IA soldiers in handling the numerous repair jobs the wiring systems in and around Baghdad will require in the years ahead.

Originally designed only as a class to enhance the skills of the Iraqi engineers in maintaining and repairing the copper cable systems typically used in Iraqi wiring systems, the students' know-how and enthusiasm for learning quickly moved them forward into the area of fiber optics.

“Out of all the cable installations in the international zone and all the repair jobs at all the different forward operating bases, teaching these men has given me the most pleasure,” said Landry.

After a few days training on the copper cable processes, the Iraqi engineers requested they also be taught the fine art of fiber optic cable installation, said Sgt. First Class Tim Landry, who hails from Killeen, Texas, cable platoon sergeant, Co. A. This skill will enable them to bring the communications systems of the Iraqi army into the 21st century.

The engineers were not satisfied with just learning the rudiments of copper cable, explained Guerrero, a native of Waterbury, Conn.

“They’re very eager to learn,” he said. “After we taught them about copper wire, they couldn’t get enough – they kept wanting to come back and learn more.”

“They learned the basic copper cable techniques in three to four days, and now they’ve picked up the fiber optics as well,” said Guerrero. “They’ve learned a lot in just a week. When we’re finished here today, we will go with them back to Baghdad. Tomorrow we will be watching them begin work at the Division Headquarters. They’ll be laying wire from their G2 to legal departments.”

A special touch is required to splice fiber optic cable since the glass fibers are encased with fiber insulation sealed inside a plastic coating. Unlike copper, the fibers are delicate and can be easily broken by using too much pressure to cut the casing while splicing cables to connectors.

“There is a lot of difference in the cable,” observed Capt. Obeed. “This is very good to learn. I’m an engineer, but I didn’t know how to connect this cable before. Now it is very simple for me. No one knows about this. When we go back, we will teach them.”

“At first, cutting fiber was hard,” concurred Sadam. “Now I see how much pressure to use, not to cut the (glass) fibers.”

The course was taught using train-the-trainer techniques, with all teaching materials recorded onto CDs. Handbooks were also provided to assist the Iraqi students in teaching their own officers and soldiers, said Landry.

“When we go back, we will train them (IA soldiers), and we will choose the good ones to teach,” said Capt. Obeed. “Then they can teach others. I think it will help us to connect all the buildings. With this (technology) we can connect them for better communications, to improve the quality and bring us into the 21st century.”

Training the Iraqi soldiers was also a source of personal enlightenment, said Ortiz, a native of Bayamon, Puerto Rico.

“The best thing about this is that this is the first time we’ve ever worked with foreign nationals,” he said. “We’ve learned about them and them about us.”

With Soldiers from 4th Inf. Div. preparing to redeploy soon, the classes taught by the Co. A Soldiers will soon come to an end. Whether the Iraqi engineers can sustain the new technology will depend mostly on them and those they train.

“They will be self-sustaining before we leave,” said Guerrero.

Soldiers from Co. A will remain available to advise the Iraqi engineers until they redeploy, said Landry. The equipment the Iraqi engineers require will also continue to be available to them until the unit redeploys. After that, the replacement company will be able to carry on the work.

“They’ve moved from copper to glass in just a week. We’re very proud of their accomplishment, and I’m proud of my Soldiers because they planned and executed this program from start to finish,” said Landry



### **Class Portrait 1.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Engineers from the 6th Iraqi Army Division senior staff and their 4th Infantry Division instructors pose for a class photo. The team completed training in both traditional copper cable processes and fiber optics connection and learned how it will improve communications. Pictured from left to right are (rear) Sgt. Scott Guerrera, 4th Inf. Div. cable support team, and a native of Waterburg, Conn.; Capt. Ziyad Tariq Obeed, engineer, Communication Systems Company 6th IAD; Spc. Jose Oritiz, 4th Inf. Div., who hails from Bayamon, Puerto Rico; (front row): Sgt. Maj. Zaid Ali Obeed and 1st Lt. Hadar Mohammed Sadam, 6th IAD.

(U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Ann Drier, 363rd MPAD)



### **Seals.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Spc. Jose Ortiz (left), from Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and a cable systems installer, cable platoon, Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, works with Sgt. Maj. Zaid Ali Obeed, engineer, Communications Company, 6th Iraqi Army Division, as he learns the proper technique to attach a connector to the stripped fiber optics cable with the device which seals it, at a class Sept. 24. Observing is 1st Lt. Hadar Mohammed Sadam, engineer, 6th IAD.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ann Drier, 363RD MPAD)



**I can do it.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Sgt. Maj. Said Ali Obeed, engineer, Communications Company, 6th Iraqi Army Division, concentrates on putting wire through a splicing device on his own after having watched his instructor, a cable systems installer with cable platoon, Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, demonstrate the procedure during a class Sept. 24 on fiber optics.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ann Drier, 363rd MPAD)



### **Splices.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Spc. Jose Ortiz from Bayamon, a native of Puerto Rico and cable support installer with 4th Infantry Division, teaches 1st Lt. Hadar Mohammed Sadam, engineer, Communications Company, 6th Iraqi Army Division, how to use a splicing device to place the fiber optic cable into a connector that will enable him to attach communications equipment and improve communications abilities.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ann Drier, 363rd MPAD)



**Lights up.**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Capt. Ziyad Tariq Obeed, engineer, Communications Company 6th Iraqi Army Division, proudly shows his product after completing a fiber optic connection that functions correctly. Obeed attended a week of training by Soldiers from the cable platoon, Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, here Sep. 18-24. Iraqi engineers learned how to correct communications problems and install fiber optic cables to improve communications capabilities within the IA Command Headquarters.

(U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Ann Drier, 363rd MPAD)